

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An imaging unit for endoscopes comprising:

optical elements for forming an optical image;

an imaging device for photoelectrically converting the optical image formed by the optical elements;

a cylindrical hollow member for holding the imaging device, the cylindrical hollow member forming a camera assembly;

a case for hermetically storing the optical elements and the camera assembly;

a fixing member provided at a predetermined position in the case for fixing the optical elements;

an inner ring provided with a helical cam groove, the inner ring being rotatably provided in the case;

an outer ring movable by a user to rotate around the case;

a magnet for magnetically coupling the inner ring and the outer ring via the case, the magnet driving the inner ring in accordance with the operation of the outer ring;

a rectilinear groove formed in the case along an optical axis of the optical elements; ~~and~~

a cam pin provided in the outer peripheral surface of the hollow member, which engages the helical cam groove and the rectilinear groove and moves along the rectilinear groove as the inner ring rotates;

wherein the rectilinear groove restricts the movement of the cam pin in a rotating direction and guides the camera assembly in advancing and withdrawing directions with respect to the optical elements; and

an elastic member interposed between the front end of the cylindrical hollow member for holding the imaging device and an inner side of a front end of the case for hermetically storing the optical elements and the camera assembly such that the cylindrical hollow member is constrained to only move in one optical-axis direction.

2. (Previously Presented) An imaging unit for endoscopes according to Claim 1, further comprising a movable member providing in the hollow member, the movable member moving in a direction crossing the optical axis of the optical elements, the movable member moving the imaging device by pushing the imaging device to adjust eccentricity of the imaging device relative to the optical axis of the optical elements.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) An imaging unit for endoscopes according to claim [[3]] 4, wherein an imaging surface of said imaging device is located substantially in a middle of an engagement length of a frame which holds said imaging device, the engagement length being in the direction of the optical axis.

5. (Canceled)